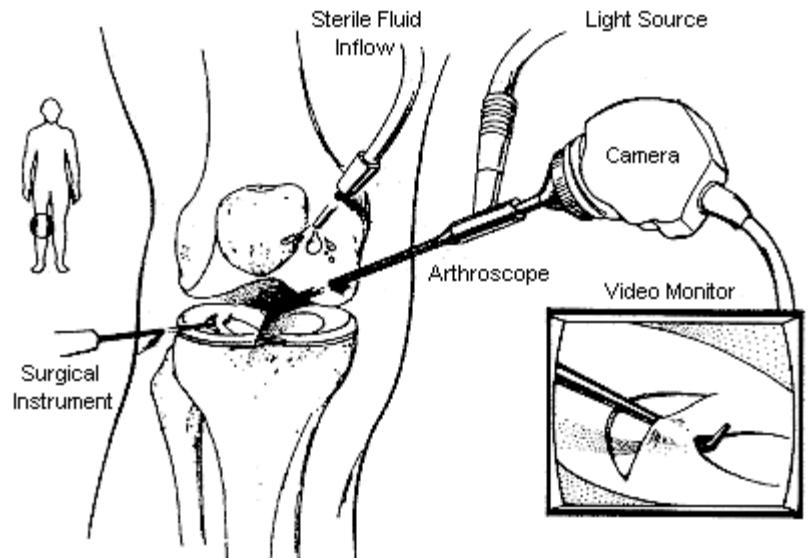


## **Knee Arthroscopy**

Knee problems can result from structural weakness, overuse, a sudden injury, or they can simply be a natural part of aging. Whatever the cause, knee problems are often successfully diagnosed and treated with **arthroscopy**, a technique which uses small incisions and allows your doctor to see clearly inside your knee.

### **The Basics of Arthroscopic Surgery**

Arthroscopic surgery is a procedure in which the inside of a joint can be evaluated and treated. The equipment used in arthroscopy includes the scope and small surgical instruments which the surgeon uses to probe, cut or shave tissue. These instruments are placed into the joint through small incisions, or portals, measuring less than half an inch. The scope itself is a small tube that has a fiberoptic light source and a magnifying lens. A camera attached to the arthroscope allows your doctor to see a clear image of most areas of the joint on a monitor.



### **Conditions Treated**

Arthroscopy can be used to treat meniscal cartilage tears, anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tears and arthritis.

There are several types of meniscal cartilage tears. Depending on the extent of the injury, a surgeon can fix the tear or remove damaged tissue to ease pain and swelling and keep the joint from locking.

A torn ACL may cause pain and swelling and may also cause the knee to be unstable and give out. An ACL is repaired with stitches or is replaced with a graft of healthy tissue from an area near the knee, or from a donor.

Arthritis occurs when the cartilage wears away and roughens due to constant use of the knee over time. Bone and cartilage fragments, or loose bodies, can also break off inside the joint. Arthritis can limit movement and cause pain. To treat arthritis, a surgeon will smooth the joint surfaces and remove any loose bodies.

### **During the Procedure**

During arthroscopic surgery of the knee, the patient first receives an anesthetic. The doctor then makes 2-4 incisions or portals in the knee. Sterile fluid is injected through the portals to expand the joint, making it easier to see and work inside the joint. The surgeon then moves the scope around the inside of the knee joint so that various areas and structures can be seen and evaluated on the monitor. Small surgical instruments such as biters, shaver, probes or scissors, are placed into the joint through the other incisions and used to remove torn cartilage, trim torn structures, or do other procedures.